

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE****METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MAINTAINING FORWARD AND BACKWARD****5 COMPATIBILITY IN FLATTENED OBJECT STREAMS**

A method, a system, an apparatus, and a computer program product are presented for object-oriented management of serializable objects. An object has a set 10 of attributes and a class version number, which identifies the object as an instance of a specific version of a class. In addition, each attribute in the object has an attribute version number, which may represent a version of a class in which the associated 15 attribute was initially declared within the class. The object may be serialized into a data stream, and the data stream has the class version number of the object, an attribute value for each attribute in the set of attributes, and an attribute version number for each 20 attribute in the set of attributes. The data stream may also have a class identifier for the class of the object and an attribute count for the set of attributes into the data stream.

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